**Thousands of protesters rally in Melbourne streets for gay marriage equality**

*Alex White*

August 12, 2012



Protesters marched up Collins Street to the Victorian Marriage Registry in the old Treasury Building in support of gay marriage yesterday. Picture: Stuart Walmsley *Source:* Herald Sun

**THOUSANDS of protesters marched the streets of Melbourne yesterday calling for the Federal Government to fall into line on the gay marriage issue.**

The 2000-strong crowd, rallied by activist group Equal Love, joined Australians supporting the cause in other major cities.

Federal Greens MP Adam Bandt told the crowd two Bills on the social issue were currently making their way through both levels of Parliament and said the public would not give up until the issue had been passed.

"The mood in the Australian population has changed and people are very relaxed with two people who are in love with each other getting married," Mr Bandt said.

"We need to do this not because it is popular ... but because it is right.

"We have these Bills and we want to hold up enough pressure in the Parliament that we have members that vote with us."

Comedian Thomas Jaspers, 25, from Carlton North, was at the rally in a wedding dress with his partner of six months, Samuel Brock, 23, who wore a tuxedo. Mr Jaspers said although he was not yet ready to say "I do" to his boyfriend, the CBD rally was about creating awareness and stopping discrimination.

"We keep coming to these rallies because it is not yet finished," Mr Jaspers said.

"It is important that people get married but it is most important for the kids. If you can't get married then how can you grow up and be seen as an equal in the community? We need to get rid of this discrimination."

During the protest, Gloria Jean's was booed after the crowd was reminded of revelations earlier this year that the cafe franchise donated $30,000 to an anti-gay marriage group.

Read more: http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/thousands-of-protesters-rally-in-melbourne-streets-for-gay-marriage-equality/story-e6frf7kx-1226448317147

**No conscience vote on gay marriage: Baillieu**

[](http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/by/Farrah-Tomazin)September 30, 2012

Farrah Tomazin

**The Sunday Age's state political editor.**



VICTORIA will not follow in the footsteps of others states pushing to legalise same-sex marriage, with Premier Ted Baillieu refusing to allow Liberal MPs a conscience vote on the issue.

The decision puts Mr Baillieu at odds with his New South Wales Liberal counterpart, Barry O'Farrell, who last week confirmed he would grant a free vote on a gay marriage bill to be drafted by a group of cross-party MPs later this year.

In Victoria, a private member's bill on the issue was introduced by Greens MP Sue Pennicuik in June, but would require broader political support to pass the Parliament, where the Coalition controls both houses.

Asked if he would allow a conscience vote on that bill, Mr Baillieu said through spokesman Paul Price there were no plans to change the current position. Same-sex couples in Victoria were able to register their relationships under the Domestic Partnership Register, Mr Price said, which gave them access to services and legal entitlements granted to married couples.

''Clearly the Commonwealth has undisputed authority to deal with this matter. There is considerable uncertainty as to the states' capacity to legislate and legally sustain law in this area,'' he said.

Gay rights activists yesterday said the decision was disappointing, especially as other states had begun to move on the issue.

Tasmania, for instance, could soon be the first Australian state to legalise gay marriage, with a bill co-sponsored by Labor Premier Lara Giddings and Greens leader Nick McKim due to be debated in the upper house this week, having passed the lower house last month.

In NSW, a cross-party group of Liberal, National, Labor, Greens and independent MPs - including Liberal MP Bruce Notley-Smith, the first openly gay man to hold a lower house seat in that state - also said they wanted to work together to legalise same-sex marriage.

''It's disappointing the Victoria government isn't following the lead of the other states and territories and the growing momentum for marriage equality in Australia,'' said Anna Brown, the co-convener of the Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby.

Mr Baillieu has previously said he supports civil unions, but not same-sex marriage.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/no-conscience-vote-on-gay-marriage-baillieu-20120922-26dvn.html#ixzz2AjSApZNb>

**Premier accused of reneging on gay marriage pledge**

[](http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/by/Farrah-Tomazin)September 30, 2012

Farrah Tomazin

**The Sunday Age's state political editor.**

PREMIER Ted Baillieu has been accused of reneging on a pre-election pledge to give Liberal MPs a conscience vote on gay marriage in the Victorian Parliament.

Mr Baillieu last week said he had no plans to follow in the footsteps of other states pushing to legislate for same-sex marriage — including NSW, where Liberal premier Barry O'Farrell is prepared to allow a free vote on a cross-party bill later this year.

In Victoria, the Greens already have a marriage equality bill in the upper house, but when asked if he would allow a conscience vote on it, Mr Baillieu's spokesman Paul Price told *The Sunday Age*: "Clearly the Commonwealth has undisputed authority to deal with this matter".

But the comments are at odds with a pledge Mr Baillieu made during the November 2010 election campaign.

Asked at the time if he would permit a conscience vote on gay marriage, Mr Baillieu replied: "All such issues would be a conscience vote for us".

As Tasmania's attempt to introduce Australia's first state-based same-sex marriage scheme was defeated on Thursday, gay activists called on the Premier to return to his original position.

However, Victorian parliamentarians — from both major parties — appear unconvinced about the legality of a state-based push.

"I do have some concerns about that," Labor leader Daniel Andrews said, when asked if he would be prepared to co-sponsor a marriage equality bill with the Greens, as the ALP did in Tasmania.

"I support same sex marriage, but I don't think anyone would be served well by having a marriage that is recognised in Wodonga but not in Albury."

Liberal MP Clem Newton-Brown, whose Prahran seat is one of the most diverse electorates in the state, raised similar concerns, saying a state-based scheme would be "marriage lite".

"I support marriage equality but state-based marriage is not equality, it is further discrimination," he said.

Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby co-convener Anna Brown disagreed.

"It is time for state and territory parliamentarians to show leadership in an area where the federal government has failed," she said.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/premier-accused-of-reneging-on-gay-marriage-pledge-20120930-26t0j.html#ixzz2AjRibn6s>

**Exercise**

Write to the Premier Ted Bailieu at:

Office of the Premier

1 Treasury Place

Melbourne, Victoria

Australia, 3002

Do you think Victoria should support marriage equality?

What reasons can you think of for and against marriage equality?

Are there problems with Victoria passing marriage equality but not the rest of Australia?